My dear Maria Rome 24th Feb.y 1874

Yours of the 20th I have just got & find it very pleasant, indeed you always call us such nice account of the several that you deserve all the points of your letter to be answerd & as you found me sitting idleing by the fire, I ~~have~~ determined to answer at once

On Xmas day I was invited to a splendid repast at my great fd Mrs Linders - a party of 10 & a most choice dinner - I went thro the fatigue bravely - this Lady most kindly takes me out in her fine carriage & is very attentive

Walter wrote me from Naples the other day he was passing the Roman coast & could see the mountains - fine warm & sea tranquil - he wrote on deck - In mid March he proposes a visit to me & I can receive him, he does not mention any illness so no doubt the change has done him good - Yesty I was rambling for 4 hours & not very tired

a good sign of my health is that my fingers this Winter have never turned white & no doubt this caused by my almost daily walk

I am glad that Mrs Arthur wrote you a nice letter, they dined with poor dear Claudia on that day

A gold seal I gave to Walter, had the Seventh done arms on it - 3 Cormorants, 2 above & 1 below with a wavey band between - this means that the river severs the two countries of Wales & England. This he got from the Herald authorities & is the origin of the name

Caesars Palace is on of the hills of Rome, the Palatine, some 5 miles round & abounds in antique ruins, I was there Yes & found the trees in blossom & no end of violets perfuming the air - The Roman Spring is a Paradise on account of its earliness & redundance of flowers making a delicious atmosphere

My Doctor & his Ladies make a dinner on

ate the festivals – the next will be St. Joseph's which consists of flowers & frying

I am thinking of going this spring to the sea at porto d'Anzio & perhaps the summer if it is not too hot, it's half the distance of Tolfa & will give me a change

I am glad to tell you that my new painting is much approved except that I have not yet found a purchaser but I'll be content if I find the spirits to paint for I am shamefully idle

Rome is improving immensely, the streets are getting a fine pavement, but the people have increased so largely that the narrow streets are dangerous with so many omnibuses – Antiquities are being discovered every day

'Tis a bore that I am so far away that I cannot get a peep at you even thro' a telescope & I suffer so from cold that I am afraid even the summer would be too winterish for me – I study to let well alone & am so astonished at my recovery & at my age that there is no end to my thankfulness

clear & firm, in the receipt of this money I am also clear & firm & so my bill is well made up - We have now lovely spring, the leaves and flowers are out & the fleas hopping about

I am thinking of going to Porto d'anzio a sea port 30 miles from Rome as the sea air did me such good in my 1st year - for I am tired of Folfa as my good doctor is here living in my house - They gave me such a dinner on my festival of St. Joseph - a custom here

Painting & Music are here coming to an end & there is very little doing, the German Ladies was quite a flare up - I am well in health indeed so set up that I am as twisted being in my 80th year - I'm doing a Madonna for the Folfa church as the good people consider my cure as a miracle - Now I want you to imitate me as you used to do & I cannot but think that your portrait is a great progress on the former one & that you look well however you may feel - I always wear a cap (of brown silk) as the scantiness of my hair & a cold in my eyes - Love to all

your loving brother Joe